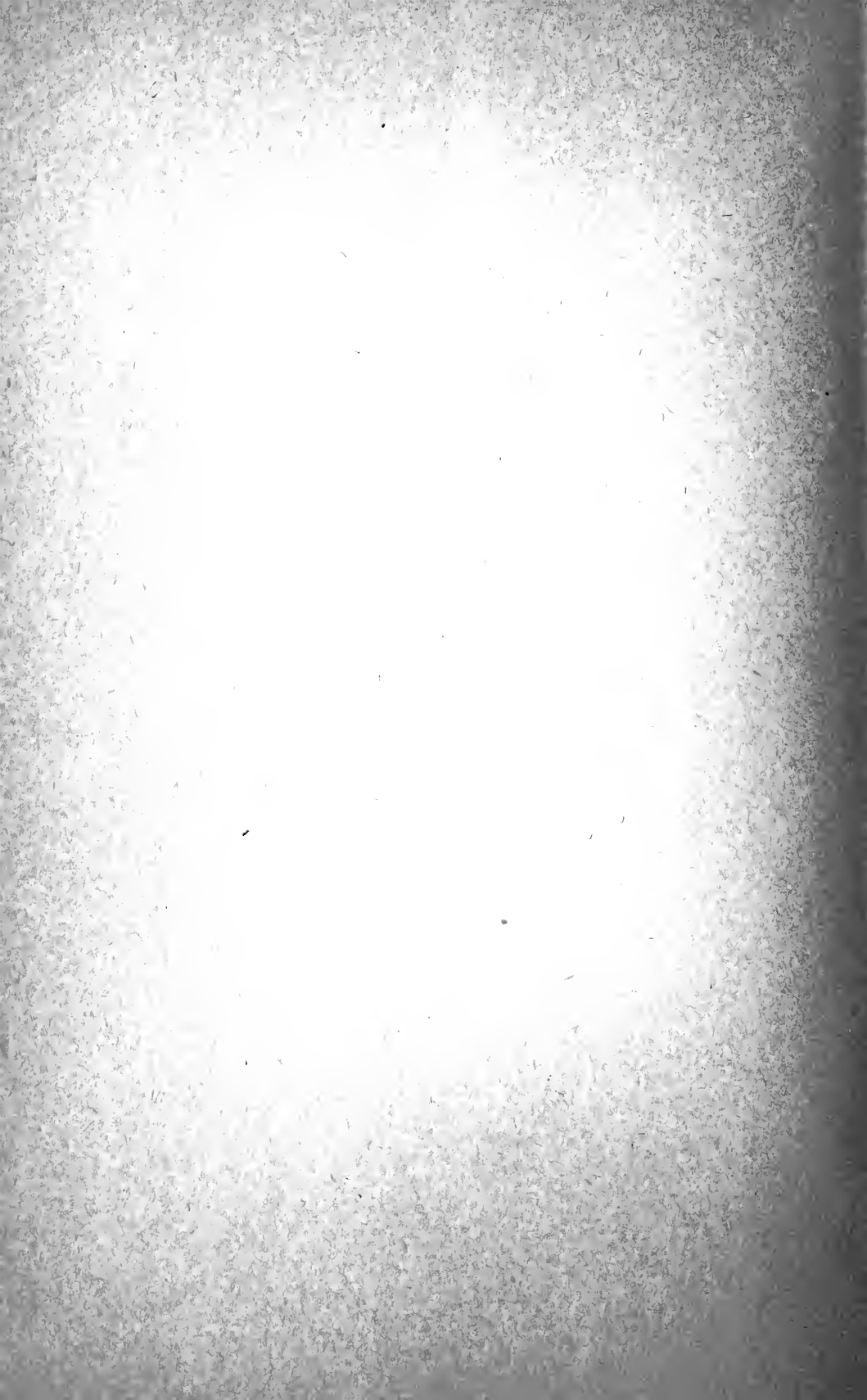


THE PILGRIMS

MELODRAMA IN THREE ACTS

By REV. JOSEPH KOVALCHIK
558 Bostwick Avenue
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

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"THE PILGRIMS"

MELODRAMA IN 3 ACTS.

By Rev. JOSEPH KOVALCHIK

DEDICATED:

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE MOST REVEREND

JOHN BONZANO D. D.

ARCHBISHOP OF MILITENE

APOSTOLIC DELEGATE OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA.

With highest expression of esteem

Yours obedient servant:

Rev. JOSEPH KOVALCHIK

No. 297

1919.

NIHIL OBSTAT.

IMPRIMATUR.

Landsford, Pa. 26, November 1919.

GABRIEL MARTYAK

Dieceesan administrator of the greek-catholics of the U. S. A.

CHARACTERS:

Valentine: youthful robber.

Margaret: orphan girl.

Sigfried: captain of the robbers.

Sepi: chief guard of the treasure chest.

Mefisto.

Sakter: the cook.

Martha: a blind old woman.

Fortune-teller.

Louis, the king.

The priest.

The holy Mother.

Old beggar.

Sweetmeat-vender.

Circus-crier.

Town drummer.

Hangman.

Polices, robbers, beggars, children, old peasants, etc.

Time: 14. Century.

MAR 16 1920

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ACT ONE.

The action in the first act takes place in the midst of a deep wood. The background portrays steep cliffs and centuries-old trees. On one side is found a projecting cliff well-covered with bushes, making an appropriate hiding-place. Between the wings on one side should be a continuation of a path leading down from the mountain.

SCENE 1.

The orchestra plays an old Styrian air for the opening, while the curtain rises slowly.

VALENTINE: (A youthful robber, standing on a mountain peak).

How lonely is a robber's life,
Tho he lives in the green woods free,
He owns no mother, sweetheart, wife,
Cruel his fate, as cruel can be;
Love he knows not, from whom to learn
Mountain his home, his roof the skies,
For love he dreams, for love he yearns,
For love's embrace his sad heart cries

Loved by no man, a hunted beast,
I too love not, my heart's a stone,
For me they hunt, both west and east
Come one, come all, fear I have none;—
And yet a strange, a holy feeling
Across my heart steals softly thru,
Before my mother I seem a-kneeling,
Ah, lonesome heart, were this but true!

Ah, yes, a robber's life is a lonesome life! Here I must stand on this mountain peak to look out for possible prey. It is my duty to lead the innocent victims to the knife. And how often is my

heart moved within me upon hearing the victims' cries of "Mercy!" But what could I do? Should I protest, I too will be killed. My comrades will stop at nothing. How happy that sneaking Mephisto would be to see me strung up. He would walk around me and grin—and tease the captain for trusting me instead of him. But no, I will make no such sacrifice for him, let come what may.

Yet I cannot understand why everyone who passes by this spot, stops to rest and to humbly ask something of this picture. What can it be?

I saw an old woman here yesterday picking wood and crying bitterly. I didn't disturb her seemed greatly troubled. What does this picture portray to her? Perhaps her husband, or some relative lies buried there. (He steps off the peak, goes before the crucifix and scrutinizes it).

Oh marvellous! He doesn't seem different—and yet he does. His side is pierced, his hands are nailed, his head is covered with blood, his legs nailed too. Oh, it is terrible! He must have fallen into robbers' hands, and my own companions may have nailed him to this tree. He must be buried here; Is that why that poor woman comes here and cries. I am frightened... I tremble... Why must I be a robber? Others live together peacefully, while we are hiding in the woods?

Why must we always hide? I cannot understand...! It is because we are robbers! Our Captain tells us we are the world's handsomest men—and yet we have no sweethearts. I don't understand. I don't understand. It is because we are so handsome and so brave, the women fear to approach us? And then our Captain cautions us, "Boys, we have but one enemy whom we must fear and avoid, it is Women!" And yet, I don't think women are so ugly!

But I will cover this man who has suffered so much, with cool branches, so that he will not be annoyed by the stings of the mountains flies... But what are the voices I hear? Quickly to my hiding place! for I must be an guard! I will listen, and if there be any booty then to-night we will have a good supper and good cheer.

SCENE II.

MARGARET: (young girl)

Red strawberries for supper I gather,
trala lala la la la,

While gayly the fragrant woods I roam
trala lala al la la
Tho to remain here I would rather,
trala lala la la la,
With filled basket must hurry home
trala lala la la la.

OR:

Picking sweet strawberries here and there,
here and there, here and there.
Flitting thru fields and woods anywhere,
anywhere, anywhere,
O'er flowery path tripping to echo's clear ringing.
thru the air.

Oh look, a great big strawberry—and here a four-leaf clover'. I have never been to this spot before. I've been told not to come because there are many poisonous snakes in the grass, but if I see a snake I shall run away. I shall pick a few more berries and then run home.

VALENTINE:

What a pretty child! Must we fear creatures like this? Our Captain must be a coward to be frightened by such folks. Let me approach the dreaded enemy! (To Margaret) Tell me, little dove, what do you seek in this great woods which even the birds avoid? I am not afraid of you. Not I! no indeed, I am not afraid!

MARGARET: (frightened)

But I am afraid of you, because you have a gun and a knife at your side. I am frightened—oh so frightened!

VALENTINE:

This is great! Our Captain warns us to fear women and lo and behold! They are afraid of us. Be brave, my boy as brave as your were at the Carinthain Fair where you beat up eight constables single-handed. Woman! don't move, or I will shoot!

MARGARET:

I am not a women. I-I am a girl, I won't move. Dare move either. I am not afraid of you or your weapons. (Aside) He is a coward, for a moment ago he was feared me.

VALENTINE:

Curses! I afraid of you! Look here! (He draws his knife) See this! You are as good as a dead if you move!

MARGARET:

Aha! I will move! What? Afraid of you? (Goes to youth coaxingly) Tell me, is it right to scare a little girl like me? Who ever heard of heroes such as you, terrorizing little girls? Put that knife back into your belt. (Taking his hand which holds the knife, she gently forces him to place knife back into his belt.) There, now we can talk.

VALENTINE:

Think of it—this little mite to disarm me without the use of a weapon. I never saw such a thing. But it is also true that I never saw a prittier little elf-elf than this. Well, Captain, we will see wheter you told the truth or not, for this little one is not so frightful after all.

Well, women, what do you want of me? Speak quickly, for this time it will not be my knife but my gun, that I will point at you woe be to you, if you move!

MARGARET:

I am not a women, you idiot! Can t you see that I am a young girl? I thought I was speaking to a gentleman, but I find him a stupid animal. If I dare to move... Wait, you grizzly bear, it is you who will move in a hurry, and dance, too. I will make this bear dance! That I will!

VALENTINE:

A girl! Then she isn't a woman! Oh, then there is no danger, for our Captain told us to beware of woman. What in tarnation is a girl? I will investigate, but carefully cautiously, or I may spoil it all. Now to question this woman, that is, girl, because I want to know what a girl is!

DUETT:

VALENTINE:

Tell me please what a girl is,
Don't conceal what a girl is!

MARGARET:

A girl is everything nice,
Heaven's gift straight from the skies,
A soul-mate from above sent,
Comfor when joy is spent.
Sharing sorrow, easing pain,
Rainbow coming after rain.... Repeat.

MARGARET:

Now my turn it is to know,
About women what you know.

VALENTINE:

Women is like Autumn day;
Light that slowly fades away
Peasing Spring, approaching fall,
Gentle loving true and all.
Another's true mate is she,
Do not rob her, let her be... (Repeat)

MARGARET:

I think he knows now that I am not a woman.

VALENTINE:

Of course, of course. And so I am not afraid of you, for outside of this dark woods I have nobody... neither mother or father, nor friends in life. I have only companions who do not desire friends, nor wives. But I do! I would like to have a friend who would share my troubles with me, who would not be angry with me, like my companions, they do not know what love is, for they have never loved anything but this woods... this dark, dreary woods. I would like such a friend, but who would be such a friend to a poor, lonesome boy like me?

MARGARET:

Oh, you can have friends too! Seek the Madonna, our good Mother, who knows everyone, and loves us, because she is our good Mother. Listen, she is calling now. Dont you hear the evening bell? That is her voice calling us. See! I will ask her to send me a good friend too, a real friend.

HYMN. (Margaret)

Holy Mother, Virgin Mary,
Look down on us from Heaven we plead,
Upon our knees we pray to Thee
Our humble plea we beg thee heed.
Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus Tecum, Ave Maria.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
Et Benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus,
Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis,
Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis. Amen.

VALENTINE:

Oh, how beautiful your plea is. Behold, I will also plead with you.

DUETT:

Holy Mother, etc.

MARGARET:

It is getting late. I must go. I live in the nearest charcoal burner's house. If you care to, you may come to see me; my dear mother will not be angry. You are not so fearful as I thought, in fact, you are sturdy fellow. Well goodbye, till we meet again. Till we meet again...

SCENE III.

VALENTINE: (muttering to himself) I feel so strange... I feel we're different, as if I were another person... (In the distance is heard the robbers' signal)

VALENTINE:

I hear the captain's voice.

SIGFRIED: (Captain of the robbers)

SONG OF THE CUCKOO)

Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo (echo —cuckoo cuckoo

Well boys, how do you do? (echo) —you do—you do
(Robbers arriving from all sides, singing)

No chance for booty we found

Not a soul today has been round;

Let's pitch our tents for sleep

To-morrow fresh vigil we'll keep.

Refrain:

Let's pitch our tents, etc.

SIGFRIED:

Well, Valentine, my son, why are you so sad? Because we found no booty to-day? That is nothing! that has happened before and is sure to happen again. Supper will soon be ready and with wine and song, we will forget to-day. I like you more than anything else in the world. I don't like to see you worry.

VALENTINE:

Tell me please, Captain, who were my father and mother!

SIGFRIED: (alarmed)

Father... mother? I don't know. We found you and brought

you along with us... since then you have belonged to us. But why are you so anxious to know about your father and mother? We have no fathers nor mothers; the field and woods are our homes, the green grass is our bed, the flowers our pillows... could anyone wish for a happier life? There is no better life than the robber's life.

MEFISTO: (who had been listening)

Ho ho! Captain! Don't be so gay! Don't forget that we have returned to-day with emty sacks, and eat we must. Lately you haven't paid much attention to our profession. I blieve you are stalling. Oh, things aren't like they used to be in the good old days... when to the tune of joyful music we surrounded and robbed the G.... convent! But we were in a fine fix next day!

SEPI: (Chief guard of the treasure chest:)

You said something, old boy! There the monks cooked our supper and we ate in grand style. We drank their good wines... and all that church treasure—Whew! There was so much gold that two horses could hardly carry it!

MEFISTO:

You sure did show us what you knew there... we were almost caught with the goods because of your cleverness. If it wasn't for me, we would all have been marching with a bal and chain around our ankles. But I had sense enough to bring the G..... goldsmith along, who melted the gold for us so that it couldn't be recognized. There's brains, here, Sepi, old boy!

SEPI:

Your head is full of sawdust, not brains! How about the time we robbed the Jew, din't I save your Captain and the whole band? You din't understand Jewish tricks. Do you remember when he said, "Brave gentlemen, there is only one thing I ask of you, let me see my wife and children just once again. Take me to them or bring them here to see me." "Woldn't that be fine", said the Captain. But we will lead you to your wife." And friend Jew kept "oj-oj-ing" until we found ouselves surrounded by the police. He prayed his son out of the window and he brought the police on us. Just let me catch another Jew—I assuare you he'll never pray again. A little while ago it was this kid, Valentine, prevented me from sending one of them to Kingdom Come. But he's only a kid, so I am not suprised.

MEFISTO:

He's a child no more, but a full-grown man. I can't stand the kid because he has the Captain in his power. For quite a while now, our Captain has paid no attention to business at all, and you know that our business is the most important thing in the world to us, for them there is always something good cooking in the cauldron. Isn't that so, friend Sakter? You must hand it to Sakter here, he is a great coock, he knows all abaout kitchen work.

COUPLET:

SAKTER:

What shal I cook to-day, no food have we here,
A hungry mob,captain, before you does appear!
To our business then, boys, rob where rob we can,
To keep this pot boiling, will strive every man.

MEFISTO:

Our business is to rob, our pleasure too, this;
To make men tremble, ah! And for mercy cry.
To hear them curse! Ha, ha! True delight that is.
If us they should resist, for then they must die.

SEPI:

Love, happiness, what rot, for these some men sigh,
Girls, women, the whole sex, you know how they lie.
Our business let's attend—let women alone
Else we will have to eat, not even a bone.

VALENTINE:

Women's love, or maid's love means so much to me
'Twould be my joy, my wealth, my life it would be.
To be loved by a women, I've heard often tell
Is to taste here on earth, either heav'n or hell.

SIGFRIED: (Sings last two lines, "To be loved by women
etc. with Valentine).

How true it is! Valentine, you will taste either heaven or hell right here on earth if you ever come accross the love of a women. I wish I had never learned what love is! I wish I had set eyes on a woman. Then I would not be here among you.

Oh, but 'I am not soft I have no more feelings. I am a wild warrior of the woods, men fear me and tremble before me... just as I too fear all men!

MEFISTO: (To Sepi)

Didn't I tell you that the captain went crazy? Goodbye, good old times! The old man has turned soft. But as for me... I only like the sight of blood... blood..... brrrrr!!!

SEPI:

If it's blood you like, eat blood pudding.

MEFISTO:

Blood pudding? Alright. I'll eat blood pudding! But of whose blood it will be made. I know not. I feel like fighting, killing, musing up everything.

SAKTER:

Why don't you join the army?

VALENTINE:

I would suggest the made-house.

MEFISTO:

What did you say, Kid! You'll die for it. Let me at your belly so that I can pull out your insides.

SEPI:

Well, you don't have to be a tiger. It takes two to make a bargain.

MEFISTO:

Two... I'll show you. (Draws dagger) Die, you damned suckling. Die our Captain's evil spirit... (Others grab him... The Captain awakens because of the commotion.)

SIGFRIED:

Well, what's up? Do you want to start a fight? Don't you have enough fighting in the woods? What! you want to stab one another? Well, this is a nice piece of work, I must admit.

MEFISTO:

Valentine sent me to the mad-house.

SAKTER:

Well, he couldn't send you to God's house.

MEFISTO:

Well, I might as well go there. Here we can't fight—there's no one to plunder. To-morrow the pilgrimage to Maria Cell begins.

Captain, here's your chance to show us whether you are the fellow you were, or a cowardly old woman. Boys, do we go to the shrine?

ALTOGETHER: Wo do.!

VALENTINE: (To Sigfried.)

But we are not going to commit murders there too? Why, there will be girls there, not only women! I don't want to harm girls. I am against going to the Cell shrine! Come on, Mefisto, old pal, let's call it off!

ALTOGETHER: We are going to the Cell shrine!

SIGFRIED:

I don't like to harm women and girls, either, let us find some other kind of work to do.

ALTOGETHER: We want to go to the Cell shrine.

MEFISTO:

You see, Captain, it is a pity to make so many enemies for yourself just for this kid. Boys! Either our Captain comes along, or we choose another, a man for our Captain!

SIGFRIED:

Wait! You don't have to choose another. I will go with you so that you can't say that your Captain is a cowardly dog. It is settled. Now for the feast, let's have a gay old time and mark it is not cowardice but decency that makes me look upon the robbing of the pilgrims so wrong. Squat down and fall to eating, tap two barrels of wine, let us a night of it. Who knows whether we shall ever have another.

SCENE IV.

(Scene shows robbers feasting, eating, drinking)

VALENTINE: (Off to one side) Captain, I have never seen you so sad. Tell me what is troubling you?

SIGFRIED:

I will tell you my heart's innermost secret, if you wish to hear it, but do not think me a coward because no man's son has ever been able to cope with these strong arms.

MUSIC... SIGFRIED'S SOLO.

When in my mother's loving arms I lay
As little bird in downy feathered nest,
With a voice sweet and low a prayer she'd say,
To a heavenly Mother to guard my rest.

The prayers she taught me so long ago
Are but sweet holy memory now
I was told to hold my little hands so
And with her my little head I would bow.

But mother died and let me here alone,
My poor broken heart for love fiercely yearned
A wicked woman claimed me for her own,
The agony of such love I soon learned.

I was her fool, a meek obedient slave,
For her embrace, my foolish heart did crave,
Her cruel lips mocked love with things she muttered
She, the only woman I ever murdered.

VALENTIE:

That was a horrible experience. I don't wonder that now you detest all womankind. No wonder you warned the boys to fear no one but women. And yet, such is life, to-day you meet your fate, to-morrow it is my turn. Let us not worry, but wait for the to-morrow.

SIGFRIED:

No indeed, don't you worry, but my God protect you from women.

VALENTINE:

Who is this God who could protect me from women?

SIGFRIED:

My son, we are not worthy to mention his name, because he is holy and powerful. Every man is his subject. We can not fight him.

VALENTINE:

Then may God protect me. Yes, he must protect me, because I am beginning to fear something.

SIGFRIED:

Never fear, but remain alert. And, in order to put your

bravery to the test, I will appoint you guard to-night, for you can see, these others are all drunk. Good-night, my son.

VALENTINE:

Good-night, Captain!

(Evening serenade . . . music and robber's lullaby.)

The woods inery silence rests,
Hiding our secret dark and drear,
The birds are huddled in their nests,
Grim spirits flying ever near.

We feel them flitting past our face,
Our limbs grow weak, our blood turns cold,
We tremble from their cold embrace;
Are we the robbers brave and bold?

Soon sleep closed our weary eye,
Into sweet forgetfulness we fall,
While overhead the night birds fly,
And the screech owl gives his gruesome call.

VALENTINE:

It is frightfull: To heve to keep guard alone in the midst of a dark dreary woods. Ouch, the crows peck at my tired body, and sorrow fills my soul. No, no, I will not have the women and children murdered. Oh, God, you who are so powerful, give me light. What shal I do? Oh, you beautiful woman, Madonna, to whom Margaret and I prayed—speak, speak tell me what to do to prevent this wholesale slaughter. (Last verse of robbers' lullalaby is repeated here). God is just, one cannot desert him. I will go . . . I will go to Margaret . . . I will meet the pilgrims, I will warn the police, I will ga to you my Margaret, you advise me what to do. What am I to do?

My concience has awakened in me.
Thru my love for a maiden sweet;
Oh, Heavenly Father, speak to me,
You, too Bles't Mother, I entreat.

(Slowly, carefully, he steals out from the robber's camp, looks about guardely, spits upon Mefisto (who is sliping) and disappears.)

Curtain drops to the tune of suft slow music.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT TWO.

SCENE I.

(Scene: A cross-road in the woods. On one side there is the picture of the Madonna placed in a tree-trunk... on the other side there is a simple wooden hut showing a door and a window. The roads lead from the backgrounds and meet in a V shape at the center back of the stage.)

Upon the rise of the curtain, one finds the stage filled with group of pilgrims and children.

PILGRIM'S SONG.

CHILDREN'S CHORUS:

The sun has risen on the Pilgrim's starting day,
We all travel forth, children, youths, folks old and gray.
Gifts we take to Mary, and childish wishes too,
The birds sing on our way as the woods we pass thru.

YOUTHS' AND MAIDENS CHOURS.

Girls and youths also bring their request to Mary
Year in, and year out, these requests never vary.
Our hearts it is we bring before thee, oh mother!
In exchange for it, give us love for each other.

OLD PEASANTS CHORUS:

Our desires and pleadings, more serious are they,
For our children's happiness, we will ever pray;
Bless and protect and love our families great and small,
And guide their steps to know and love thee, each
and all.

(All the Pilgrims kneeling in front of the Madonna.)

Oh, Holy Mother, Virgin Mary, etc.....

(Slowly procession moves off stage, while singing gets softer and finally dies in the distance.)

SCENE II.

MARTHA: A blind, old woman).

Oh, God, how divinely the Pilgrims sang, and I cannot go along with them because I am blind! Come out, Margaret, my daughter, and if we can't go to the shrine, at least we can pray before the Madonna's face.

you set off. Do not stop to talk to anyone. And fear all men because men are really frightful beings. If someone wants to stop and talk to you, run away. Well, let us go inside. . .

SCENE III.

VALENTINE:

My Margarat must live in this little hut for this is the charcoal burner's house. I will see if she is here. (Taps on window of hut.)

MARGARET:

Oh, it is you! I didn't expect that you would come to me so soon! Do you not fear anymore? Aren't you afraid of me? Well, we shal see.

Mother, mother, come out here please and meet the young man that I met in the woods. of whom I was not afraid. But he was afraid of me for he was of the opinion that "Woman should be feared."

MARTHA:

Welcome to our home, my young friend. I am very glad that a good friend of my daughter's has come to visit us. But come closer, for, as you see, my eyes have given up their services already. I can only judge a good man if he comes very close to me. There! I can tell you are a good man because you come trustingly to me and you don't draw back. The feeling of your head and hair make a favorable impression on me.

Now tell me, are you accustomed to pray? Do you go to church? Have you parents?

VALENTINE:

Gracious lady, or better yet, good mother, you ask if I am accustomed to pray. . . I grew up an orphan, I never knew my father or mother. I picture my mother to look like you, good woman, and the only prayer I know is one that had been taught me by a charming girl, whom I thank for her kindness. This prayer is continually on my lips and in my heart. Forever rings the sweet voice that first sang it to me. I shall never forget it, for she, of whom the prayer speaks, She too is a mother, our Mother.

Prayer: "Holy mother, Virgin Mary, etc. . ."

MARTHA:

Why, that is your prayer, isn't it, my daughter?

Trio: "Holy mother, Virgin Mary, etc. . ."

VALENTINE:

This is my first and most beautiful prayer, and I would like to die to the tune of this prayer.

MARTHA:

Children, I will go to pick some wild fruit for you. Enjoy yourselves, I know that young people always have something to say to one another.

VALENTINE:

Do not bother, good mother, because I must hurry away, but when I finish my task, I will come back and then perhaps I will never, never go away from here.

MARTHA:

If duty calls you, go, my son! My house will always be open to you.

(Exit Martha.)

MARGARET:

But, my dear friend, you have just come and you want to leave us already? I wonder why? Have you tired of us?

VALENTINE:

No, dear Margaret, I am hastened by a holy duty, for if I should be too late. . . Oh, God forbid. . . a terrible thing will happen. So do not bid me stay to-day. I would stay here indefinitely—always, but not now. I leave now, so that I won't be late. But, Margaret mine, since you have taught me to pray, since you have taught me to believe, teach me to hope too, for I cannot live without you.

MARGARET:

You may hope and now you must go to fulfill your holy duty. I shall never, never forget you.

(Exit Valentine.—Margaret enter house.)

SCENE IV.

SIGFRIED:

This will be the most suitable hiding place. In vain, I tried to avoid this day. . . it could not be done. That damned Mefisto

would want the boys to revolt against me... Yet I feel that it will be hot for me to-day! My intuition has never deceived me.

But what is this?... The face of the Madonna! The Madonna! All of us are in for it now. We chose the worst spot for the robbery. Well, you certainly made a nice job of this, Mefisto.

For the sake of those childhood memories of my mother's pious teachings, of Madonna, forgive me. I am not at fault... Not for this hellish deed. You can read my soul and see for yourself. So that my bad band cannot see your face, I shall cover you, do not look at the dreadful crimes we are about to commit. Now I'll call the crowd.

CUCKOO SONG. Cuckoo, cuckoo, etc...

SCENE V.

(Robbers altogether join in cuckoo song, which they sing as they enter.)

SIGFRIED:

Forward, bold robbers, gayly, bravely,
There is nothing here which we must fear,
Fortune awaits him, who daring will be;
Sure death will be his, who fear shows here.

Chorus:

A true robber bold, always takes a chance,
Fear to him unknown, to true robber bold,
Death woult never own a true robber bold,
a true robber bold.

SIGFRIED:

Boys, I'am not superstitious, but I feel that we ought to choose another spot to attack the pilgrims, for my intuition scents danger.

MEFISTO:

Captain, you are acting childish again. You have become an old woman who believes in witchcraft! You ought to be ashamed. I declare, we have a fine leader in you! Superstitious, childish, an never accepts good advice. You were left in the lurch lastnight too, by your favorite! Valentine disappeared, leaving this honorable band and the Captain flat. But didn't I say you would find out some day who Valentine really was? I suppose he's working for himself, or else he is going to betray us.

SIGFRIED:

Valentine would not do such a thing. . . No, no.

MEFISTO:

Perhaps it is done. But what care I. One thing is sure, the Pilgrims of Cell cannot avoid meeting us. Their goose is cooked. I shall stick my dagger into the heart of the first one of them I spy! I'll show you that I'm not chicken hearted!

SIGFRIED:

Enough of that stupid talk, don't jibber-jabber so much. Now to find your places.

You, Sepi, go to the nearest village and find out when the procession will start. Forward, march! The rest of you will arrange yourselves in the following order:

The second group will go to the left, and hide behind the bushes. When Sepi comes back, I shall whistle the signal and then you will attack the Pilgrims from every side.

The second group will go to the left and hide behind the trees, and we will wait for Sepi's announcement in back. Every man to his place!

MEFISTO:

Captain, before we start the game, wouldn't you give the gang a little courage juice? You know, we will be in a better frame of mind and then, we need a little acouragement.

SIGFRIED:

Why, just now you were the bravest in the lot and you are in need of encouragement already! Do you want to encourage your throat or your knife? Well, let it be, each may have a swig of whiskey, but no more, and then to work.

WHISKEY SONG.

MEFISTO:

Good courage, juice in a fat jug,

grug, grug, grug, grug;

Makes me feel like a lightning bug,

bug, bug, bug, bug bug bug;

My eyes glitter, my big head spins,

ha-ha-ha, ha-ha-ha,

I see all sorts of strange, strange,, things

la, la, la, la, la, la.

On my feet I can scarcely stand,
he heh he heh he;
I see pink snakes wound 'round my hands,
ne ne ne, ne ne ne;
Woman and wine are not for me,
(not for me, not for me)
no no no, no no no;
'Tis whiskey makes a reg'lar spree,
whiskey for me, whiskey for me.
(All robbers exeunt behind the scenes)

SCENE VI.

Margaret and Martha enter together)

MARTHA:

Goodbye, my child and God bless you. (Wiping eyes, she goes back).

MARGARET: (Walks slowly to center stage, singing the prayer to the Madonna. At the same time, there is a shrill whistle and Sepi rushes into the stage from the right—the other robbers from the left, and the surround the frightened girl. Music and singing stops.)

SEPI:

Captain, I wish to announce that we have been tricked; the Pilgrims departed yesterday, and have already reached Cell. I waited for a long time, and then tired of waiting, I sneaked into the village and there learned that they have set off laden with many gifts, and so we are left outwitted. You bet!!

SIGFRIED:

That cannot be true, for the celebration only takes place to-morrow!

SEPI:

But it is true. Oh, what a swag we missed!

MEFISTO:

We can thank Valentine for this. He will make it not for us too. I suppose he will even bring the police onto us. But who's this girl? And say, but she's pretty... ha ha ha.

SIGFRIED:

Bring the girl before me. Where are you going, Miss?

MARGARET:

To the shrine at Cell.

SIGFRIED:

Where? Did I hear alright? Then we can have a hope, perhaps they have not started. If the girl is just preparing to go, then it is very likely that they are following on. It will be well to question the girl, and if they have really gone, we will make them dance to our fiddle on their way back.

Why don't you go with the others pilgrims? It is much pleasanter travelling in company. Besides, it is not advisable to travel alone thru so deep a woods! We are worthy men, you need not fear us. Speak boldly.

Did you see the pilgrims go by this way? We want to protect them against robbers, for, you know, this woods have many robber camps in them. You will be doing us both a worthy service, if you answer the following questions concerning them. Do they go in large numbers? Do they take gifts to the Virgin?

MARGARET:

Yes, I will tell you. Yesterday I was out with my blind mother as they went by, praying and singing beautiful hymns. We joined in singing. I wanted to go too, and ask the wonder-working Virgin to restore my mother's sight.

Everyone takes gifts, and there you meet men from all stations of life, even kings are at the shrine at Cell! I was there once before and I shall never forget the day, when our king and his court entered the church. There you can find everything. Around the church are all sorts of displays, tents in which they have refreshments, fortune-tellers and other things. I would not say the pilgrims carry guns because they do not go to the shrine to fight, but to pray.

The people there are so good and kind that they would touch no one, and no one would harm them.

MEFISTO:

Well, this plan was nothing. What fools we were! But that damned, infernal Valentine is to blame for it all. Oh, if I ever get him in my clutches I will make him remember the Cell pilgrimage to his dying day. I want to drink blood... to murder someone...

SIGFRIED:

Tell me, my child, what gift you are taking to Mary, since you are going there?

MARGARET:

What can a poor girl like me take? I am taking nothing but my loving heart, which I wish to give her as a gift.

SIGFRIED:

And do you think the Virgin Mary will be satisfied with your heart? Oh, you stupid, silly child! You should take some other gift instead, for instance money or golden articles and the like.

SEPI: (Smoothing Margaret's face) Or else a kiss like this. (Kisses her).

MARGARET: (Pushes Sepi back) For shame! You say you are good men and yet you annoy a poor girl.

MEFISTO:

Doesn't my little pet like to be kissed? What? Suppose I asked for your heart, what would you do? You see, my little lamb, I am not so modest in my demands as my friend, I want your heart.

ROBBERS ALTOGETHER: Mefisto must have gone crazy. Nothing is farthest from our thoughts, than to have a women amongst us.

MEFISTO:

Captain, I plead for this maiden's heart. Give her to me.

SIGFRITD:

Ask her, not me.

MEFISTO:

With booty we always split decently, don't we Cap; for there is honor amongst thieves. But you can't divide a girl, so we will either have to draw lots for her, or else you decide to whom you will give her. I am waiting for your answer.

SIGFRITD:

I said, if it is her heart you want, you will have to ask

herself. If it is only the girl, the others must have a say in it too. But it will best to let her go her way, because womenkind always bring trouble—never luck. At least, they have never brought me luck. Let her go on her way.

MEFISTO:

What, let her go! I should say not! Let me speak to her I'm sure she won't look down on me, such a good-looking handsome chap.

Mefisto's Song—Duett.

MEFISTO: Have you ever seen such a handsome chap?

MARGARET: Handsome I've seen, you deserve a slap!

MEFISTO: Have you ever loved, or for loving
craved?

MARGARET: I know a mad man, who for such things
raved.

MEFISTO: Have you lover hugged, or happy man
kissed?

MARGARET: No, tell me please, sir, is it much I mis-
sed?

MEFISTO: My sweet heav'nly saint, is your heart still
free?

MARGARET: God's my heavenly saint, he, yes, only
He.

MEFISTO: I do not ask who is your saint in haven,
is there one whom your love you've given?

MARGARET: My heart loves a brave, a gallant
woodman.

To him I will be true, as true I can!

MEFISTO: Curse your pretty face, you young tiger
cat,

Cell you'll never see, take my word for that'.

MEFISTO: (Grabs Margaret't hands in one hand, with
other hand he draws fourth his dagger, forces it
into her heart, turns dagger around heart, and
cuts heart from hear breast. Margaret does not
faint, but screams—then.

MARGARET:

Blessed Mother, help me!

MEFISTO:

Here is is your heart . . . take it to Mary. Or give it to to that brave, handsome woodman. Now you can go to Cell. Hold your apron so that I can throw your heart into it. Never let me see you again. Begone!

End of the Second Act.

ACT THREE.

(The background represents the facade of the church of the Mary of Cell. The enormous double doors of the church upon opening reveal the inside contours of the church. Upon an altar-like platform in a halo of light, stands the statue of Mary. (a living statue). Both sides of the stage represent a fair of carnival and are suitably decorated. On one side there is the tent of a fortune-teller. Upon the rise of the curtain, one beholds the pilgrims and other curiosity-seeking people, and many beggars.)

SCENE I.

Lads and lasses, with arms linked together sing.

Jewels and sweets on every side beholding,
With luxuries rare we fill our wond'ring eyes,
Yet joyously into church we are hastening.
To get our true happiness right from the skies.

Refrain:

Yet joyously, etc.

SWEETMEAT VENDER:

Stop, Look! Here you can buy all sorts of magic charms and potions. Buy something now no others like them. In this stall are the prettiest novelties. .the very best candy, the sweetest honey. Only five coppers. . . five pennies.

SWEETMEAT VENDER'S SONG:

Come and buy my candy and my honey sweet,
You will find they are a rare, a handsome treat.
Forbidden sweets they are best, but, say I
You'll find my sweets are sweeter, when them you try.

CIRCUS-CRIER:

Come one, come all, come see the wonders, all the freaks,

all the curiosities! Today you must pay, but to-morrow it will be free. Isn't that good business? To-morrow—free . To-day pay. To-morrow free!

A BOY AND A GIRL:

THE BOY:

Sweetheart ,we must see this. (To crier) I say Mister, is it the truth when you say that if we pay to-day we may see it again for nothing to-morrow?

THE CRIER:

It is the truth! Me lying! I. Why should I lie? I would no more lie than an unborn baby.

THE GIRL:

Well, then, perhaps we will go in but not until we get a written statement about its being free to-morrow!

THE BOY:

Give mi a written statement that the show is free to-day; to-morrow we pay!

THE CIRCUS-CRIER:

What! What in thunder do you mean!! Free to-day, , to-morrow pay! What, youngster, you would get the best of me, would you? What do you thing my circus is a fake? Off with you!

CIRCUS-CRIER'S SONG:

You've plenty of time before to church you go,
To stop and see my great and marvellous show.
Step inside and see the giant snake so long
He could encircle this whole holiday throng.

Walk in, ladies and gentlemen, and see the big snake. He measures fifty feet from head to tail, thirty feet from tail to head. Step in and see this wonderful snake for the small sum of five cents.

AN OLD MAID:

Well ,I declare! He said the snake measures fifty feet from head to tail and thirty feet from tail to head. . what became of the remaining twenty feet?

A WOMAN:

Ask him!

OLD MAID:

Say, mister, what become of the snake's remaining twenty feet.

CIRSUS-CRIER:

Now, there, you are a clever woman! What became of it?? Why, he ate part of his tail while we were measuring it. (Aside) (Would he had eaten you instead.)

A SOLDIER AND HIS GIRL.

THE SOLDIER:

Let us get away from here, Mary. These fellows are fakirs. Let us get along. Look, there is a fortune teller. She may be smarter, than this other fakir.

THE GIRL: (To the fortune-teller)

Are you the famous fortune-teller who fore tells the future? Was it you who told Sue whom she was going to marry? Tell me when my wedding will be take place and who my husband will be? If you tell me, I will gladly pay the fee!

FORTUNE-TELLER:

I do not know whether I am a famous or not, but I am no fakir! I always speak the truth. You ask who your husband is to be—whether a soldier or a civilian; the answer is easy if you consult your own heart.

Fortune-teller's Song:

Come into my tent, your fortune I'll reveal,
Show me but your palm, there will I read with skill
Whom you will love and when your wedding will be
Al questions will I answer, for a small fee.

(To the sound of trumpets and the ringing of the church bells, a king enters the church, surrounded by his youthful and noble pages. At the doors of the church, his entrance is hindered by the beggars singing their Beggar's Chorus Song.)

MUSIC: Trumpets and bells or chimes.

Beggar's Song:

To the great King, noblest in this big city,
We stretch fourth our weak, our crippled, shaking arms
Hoping for your kind aid and gracious pity
Pity us, oh mighty king, and give us alms!

(The king and his attendants scatter money amongst the beggars and the poor people—then the double doors of the church swing open and the king and his attendants enter while the music and church chimes continue to play. After the entrance of the king and his train, the church doors close again, leaving the people, the servants, beggars, etc. outside.)

SCENE II.

TWO POLICEMEN: Drummer

Everybody must go away from here now for the holy ceremony is about to begin.

TOWN-DRUMMER:

I have the following announcement to make:

"His Royal Highness, Louis, the noble ruler of the Hungarians, having himself visited the seat of Mary of Cell pilgrimage, has graciously donated twenty-five dollars for each needy person of this region, and he has commanded that they be fed and clothed at his expense during the time of the ceremony. And, added to this, he wishes to have it announced that he will have a large church built here this spring for the glorification of the Mother of God. Altogether now, let us cheer the King. Long live our King—Louis,—our King!"

THE PEOPLE:

Long live Louis, our King!

THE POLICEMEN:

You people and all these venders must leave here now,. If you try to do business or make noise, you will be jailed. Quickly now, take down your tents and hurry away.

THE PEOPLE:

We can't go away, Sir, we can't. Our feet seems rooted to the ground—we can't go no matter how hard we try.

AN OLD BEGGAR:

Mr. Commissary! I have been here for many long years, but I was never so overpowered. To-day we will not pray in the church, but here under the skies. To-day we will behold the wonder-working Virgin.

What is that beggar saying? We are going to pray out here, are we? Well, I'll see to that! (Lays hold of beggar)

(Beggar's song:)

With joy my heart o'erflows, joy fills my quivering
breast;
Unknown pleasure waiting; unknown happiness too!
To-day will sadness end, to-day the weary rest;
I know not how or why, I only know 'tis true.

CHORUS:

To-day will sadness end, etc.

THE PEOPLE:

We will not leave here! Right here in the streets will
we stay and wait to see what is to happen.

THE POLICEMAN:

Well, so be it—but the hawkers must go. Take down your
tents and go—there must be no buying or selling of any kind dur-
ing the ceremony! Look at the fortune-teller—she takes no
heed of us but just gazed into her crystal ball... now see how
startled she is... how glad she is for something. Come,
let us drive her away. Worthless vagabond... cheating this poor
people. Away with her!

POLICEMAN: (To fortune-teller)

Leave here! The people have had enough of your lies and
cheatings for one day. Pack up your traps and go!

FORTUNE-TELLER:

But sir, you have no idea of what has happened. Could you,
but see what I saw, you would not drive me away.

POLICEMAN:

You can't fool us! We are wise to these tricks. Come away
with you and depart in peace, or else you shall be jailed!

FOURTUNE-TELLER:

Only hear me; hear me, please. This is no joke nor idle talk.

Song:

Within this crystal clear I see a dreadful sight
One to make strong men weep and gentle women faint.
The Lord God punish me with all his powerful might
If lies I speak while to you this vision I paint!
A pretty maid with joyful heart I behold,
Hast'ning thru the forest to this sacred place;

But suddenly in her path come robbers bold
Hardened men, not soft'ning to a pretty face.

Where are you hurrying and what do you bring?
They shout at her in manner to such men meet.
To the Virgin of Cell, and I bring nothing
But a true loving heart to lay at her feet.

Angered by her words, one most wicked of them all
Pierced the maid's breast and tore out the bleeding
heart,

"Take then, your heart to Mary", and he let fall
Her heart into her apron. "And now,, depart."

And strange to say, the maid never falls nor dies
But walks toward Cell, in her eyes a holy light.
The robbers gaze speechless; wonder fills their eyes,
As they gaze upon this strange, this mystic sight.

THE PEOPLE:

A Miracle! The old beggar's intuition was well- founded!

A POLICEMAN:

I, myself, think we had better let these people be, and let us
hurry off to capture the robbers.

SCENE III.

OLD BEGGAR:

Come, do not stand staring at one another, but let us form
a triumphal arch in honor of this maid who is bringing her
heart to Mary. Separate, and allow her to pass between us!
Those who have flowers, let us strew them in her path! Hark,
listen! What is that? The bells of the churches are ringing! Oh
God, oh God, abide with me and let me in my old age, see the
power and the light of thy Glory. No—I cannot endure this!
Friends, let us fall on our knees and pray.

(Soft Music)

SCENE IV.

(The people hasten out of church)

AN OLD MAN:

What has happened here to-day, that you kneel here and
pray?

THE OLD BEGGAR:

You'll soon find out.

(The King and his court appear on the scene)

KING:

I cannot explain what draws me out here. I cannot find words to express my emotions. Look in the distance? What a dazzling spectacle! Oh my, people, tell me what you see? Tell me if my eyes do deceive me!

THE PEOPLE:

A miracle! A miracle! A woman is carrying her heart... her bleeding heart!

THE KING:

A miracle! A miracle! Everyone can behold it, but the priest... he has remained in church. I will inform him of the miracle. (Exit King)

SCENE V.

MARGARET: (Sings)

Hear me, Holy Mother, from your throne on high
Heal Thou my heart, torn from out my suffering breast,
Look down at me from heav'n, else soon I shall die
Holy Virgin, Mother of the sore distressed.

(The doors of the church swing open... the Blessed Virgin steps down from her altar, the king and the priest come out of the church).

THE BLESSED VIRGIN: (Sings)

Arise sweet maiden, God has hearkened to your
prayer sincere;
He bade me cure the loving heart you sacrificed for me;
And happiness he sends you, too, by one so very dear;
Your every prayer has answered been, your mother
now can see.

(Explanation):— Immediately after her song, The Blessed Virgin disappears behind the church doors that had remained open. Then the church doors close. The rest of the people remain on the scene. Margaret looks about bewildered. She sees Valentine leading her mother to her.

MARGARET:

What do I see! Mother... Valentine... what brought you here? How did you get here?

VALENTINE:

My darling Margaret! I must confess to you that when I left you to do my sacred duty, that duty was none other than to inform the police of the plans of my fellow robbers to rob the Cell pilgrims and to kill the innocent people. And it is because I have seen you and loved you that I decided to this thing, for I realized that their plan was a very wicked and frightful one. It was my love for you that showed me how wrong it was... so I decided to prevent it.

MARGARET:

But then, you too are a robber!

VALENTINE:

I was a robber...but I am a robber no longer. In that moment when you explained to me what a girl is, what a treasure one gains who gains a loving helpmate for life, I decided to end my career as a robber.

MARGARET:

But how did my mother get here? How did you bring her along with you?

MARTHA:

Dear child, before I answer your questions, look at me.

MARGARET:

Mother, dear, dear mother! Why, your eyes are open, you can see, can't you? Oh, good Lord, you have heard my pleadings.

MARTHA:

Yes, my child, the good Lord has heard your prayers. I can see, my eyes are whole again. Now, I shall tell you how I happened to meet him, Valentine, whom it seems is to be your betrothed, and my son. Soon after you left, Valentine came to our home to inquire about you. I told him you had left for the shrine at Cell alone. Valentine was alarmed. "Not alone"? he asked. "But yes, indeed, alone," I answered. Then he told me about the robbers' plans to rob the pilgrims. He started to hur-

ry after you but I wanted to go too. He tried to discourage me, but when he knew that it was useless, he consented to let me accompany him. Thank god, that you reached here in safety!

THE FORTUNE-TELLER:

In safety? if you but know how she come here?

MARTHA:

How?

THE FORTUNE-TELLER:

The people have already heard... but I will tell it again.

THE PRIEST:

No, my beloved ones, this is my duty! (To Margaret)

Dear child! God does not work miracles openly; what is more, if unbelievers would wait for a miracle before believing... they would wait for eternity! But at times God discloses his power over the laws of nature and rules and overcomes these laws. So, to-day, we behold a miracle happen to a simple and unsuspecting child. (To Martha): Good woman! Your daughter fell into the hands of robbers, and the robbers, seeing that she carried nothing of value about her, became enraged. In their fury, they cut out her heart and cast it into her apron and scornfully bade her take that to Mary of Cell. The mother of God turned to her holy Son and asked Him not to permit nature to be the victor over this child; to preserve her life instead, and to allow her, the Blessed Virgin herself, to put back the girl's heart with her own hands. Then the Holy Mother descended from her throne! A great force urged the King and the people to leave the church... I myself stopped the holy mass and coming out saw the Blessed Virgin as she held your child's heart. Behold, your child is whole and healthy.

MARGARET:

But, reverend Father, I asked from the Blessed Virgin another favor. I asked that my mother who has blind, should have her sight restored!

THE PRIEST:

That I did not know. Let your mother now speak to us!

MARTHA:

I can not tell, what happened! Twenty years ago a dread

ful plague spread in our district. After this sickness I lost the sight of my eyes, and became blind. Well, I started on my journey to this place... Valentine was leading me... and now I see here my daughter and all the holiday crowd. That is all I know, but I thank God for visiting me, giving me back my sight! I his humble servant!

THE PRIEST:

It is only right after beholding these miracles, to give thanks to God for his mercy. Let us return to church and the unfinished mass and give to God our heartfelt thanks!

SCENE VII.

(Singing is heard off-stage.)

Now, at last, in slumber, etc. etc!

THE PRIEST

What singing is that?

(Policemen enter leading the robbers who are chained and hand-cuffed. As the robbers face the church, they bow their heads and cast themselves down upon the ground).

THE SHERIFF:

Reverend Father! These scoundrels wanted to rob the pilgrims who were on their way to Cell, and to kill the innocent and helpless woman and children. We are able to prevent this awful deed with the aid of a respectable member of their own band. We have arrested them all. They all resigned themselves to their fate but one... he pumped over cliff and was killed.

ONE OF THE ROBBERS:

He was the worst amongst us. It was he who planned the Cell robbery and massacre. It was he, Mephisto.

A POLICEMAN:

And the respectable member of the robber band was Valentine!

EVERYBODY:

Valentine?

THE SHERIFF:

Well, we brought them here to the scene of the rob-

bery because the authorities decreed that they be hanged. But before the execution, it is customary to gratify their last wishes. But here comes the hangman. Let him tell why we are here.

The Hangman's song.

To be a hangman it is no cinch, is no cinch,
I choke the life from the criminal, inch by inch.
With a great big tug I hoist him high, hoist him high,
And that is as near as he can get to the sky.

I scorn at using the guillotine, guillotine,
Why I have power to raise a man high above a queen.
At a hanging I'm Johnny on the spot on the spot,
I am willing to prove it, if you think I'am not.

And yet a kind-hearted soul am I, that am I,
And these men's wishes I'll fulfill before they die,
Their wishes were to come to Cell, each and every one,
And Cell, they will not leave until my job is done.

THE HANGMAN:

They planned to come here. Well now they are here, but not quite as they expected.

THE PRIEST:

Ah, I understand! This is their last wish. (To robbers)
Why did you want to come here? Answer me!

SIGFRIED: The chief of the robbers.

Father, our betrayer is my witness that I always opposed murder. My hands, with the exception of one well-deserve murder are free from blood-stains. The guiltiest and most wicked of our band is no longer with us... he has gone to his eternal punishment. We beg for mercy! If we cannot gain mercy, than at least let us, sinful though we be, kiss the feet of the Blessed Virgin.

VALENTINE:

Have mercy on them! Have mercy on them!

THE PRIEST: (To king)

Your Royal Highness! Will you pardon them!!!

THE KING:

They will find mercy only in God. They may offer up their souls to Him but their bodies will receive the deserved punishment.

THE PRIEST: (sings)

Oh King, to whom God gave power and glory,
Have you forgotten the Bible story?
When the son of God forgave the thief on the cross?
How can you then these men's petitions from you toss?

'Tis by Divine Right from God you enjoy, being here,
No misery you know, nor sight of tear.
By that Divine Right geve your pardon to these men
And each will be a true,, a loyal citizen.

THE KING:

So let it be then! I pardon them here, where acts of mercy and miracles take place! Unlock their handcuffs and let them be kept in this place as reminders of what has happened to-day and as a memorial of their redemption and pardon.

THE PRIEST:

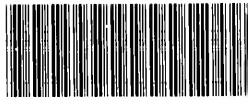
And now let us all give thanks to God and to the Blessed Virgin.

SONG:

Holy Virgin, etc.

THE END.

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